



Kilton Road
Six Bedford Farms, Suite 607
Bedford, New Hampshire 03110-6532
603 644-0888
FAX 603 644-2385

Meeting Notes

Attendees: See Attached List Date/Time: 11/19/01 5:00 to 7:00PM open house &
7:00PM Presentation

Project No.: 50885

Place: West Running Brook Middle School, Derry NH Re: Derry Public Informational Meeting

Notes taken by: Bruce A. Tasker

Prior to the formal presentation, plans were set up in an "open house" setting to address issues, comments, and questions in an informal matter with the public on an individual basis.

For the formal meeting, Jeff Brillhart opened the meeting and made introductions. He explained that this meeting is one of five Public Informational meetings being held by the Department in each of the communities along the study section of I-93 from Salem to Manchester. This meeting focuses what the Department has been doing for the last several months for the 18-mile study section of I-93 and more specifically the section of I-93 in Derry beginning at the Windham/Derry town line and running northerly to the Derry/Londonderry town line.

Jeff explained that the Department is charged with improving the capacity and safety this 18-mile section. He explained that in the Salem and Manchester areas, the highway currently carries over 110,000 vpd (vehicles per day) and 70,000 vpd, respectively. I-93 has a theoretical capacity to carry in the vicinity of 60,000vpd to 70,000 vpd. By 2020, the projected volumes are approximately 140,000 vpd in Salem and 85,000 vpd in Manchester. The highway is over capacity today. Given the volume of vehicles on the highway, and the narrow width of the highway, I-93 is less forgiving than it otherwise might be, and consequently less safe.

The Department is conducting the design and evaluation process using the format of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The EIS follows five phases. The first phase or Scoping phase was completed in May 2000 with the publication of the Scoping Report. The second phase was completed in February of 2001 with the publication of the Rationale Report. The Rationale Report documents the evaluation and screening of various alternatives. The recommendations in the Rationale Report include the following:

- Consider widening I-93 to be three lanes in each direction the entire length.
- Consider widening I-93 to be four lanes in each direction the entire length.
- Consider widening I-93 to be four lanes south of Exit 3 and three lanes north of Exit 3 in both directions.

- Construct park and ride lots at Exits 2, 3, and 5, and enhance the Exit 4 Park and ride lot as appropriate.
- Expand existing bus service to Boston with stops at Exits 2, 3, and 5 as well as Exit 4.
- Enhance bus service by providing service between the NH park and ride lots and the industrial areas along I-93 in northern Massachusetts.
- Utilize Intelligent Transportation System Technology (ITS) and improve upon the Department's incident management capabilities.
- Incorporate TDM and TSM measures as practicable. The TSM would include short-term, localized improvements to address immediate safety concerns and capacity improvements where possible. TDM measures include initiatives to encourage motorists to carpool, use bus service, telecommute, and otherwise make fewer trips, and thus reduce demand on the highway.

The Rationale Report also suggested that the Department not pursue the following:

- Instituting rail service as part of this project at this point in time. Ridership for any rail service would not eliminate the need to widen the highway. However, the Report notes that rail service will in all likelihood be required in the future if NH is to maintain the level of mobility that is expected today. It is proposed that any widening of I-93 be done in such a manner as to retain the room for the possibility of a rail line in the highway corridor sometime in the future.
- Constructing high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes, as the ridership will not meet the threshold necessary to justify the lanes.

Currently the Department is in Phase III of the EIS development process. The DEIS document is scheduled to be available in March of 2002.

Other activities the Department is addressing include:

- A bike route or trail is being evaluated along I-93 corridor.
- Potential secondary impacts are being evaluated, which are different than direct impacts. Direct impacts are impacts to resources (i.e. wetlands, etc.) and properties, which are immediately related to the highway-widening footprint. Secondary impacts (which may happen as a result of making NH more accessible by widening the highway) occur when additional homes and businesses are developed creating it's own environmental impacts. To study these secondary impacts, the Department is utilizing an Expert Panel. The panel of experts in the fields of land use, development and economic issues are being asked to answer questions relative to what the growth in NH might be if I-93 is widened or not widened.
- Over the past year, the Department has been working with local safety (police and fire) agencies, State Police, and the FHWA to consider what steps might be taken to improve incident management capabilities; that is, addressing accidents along I-93 in a more timely manner to minimize delays and congestion. Some measures have been implemented and other will be added over the next year to improve the incident management capabilities before construction, during construction, and after construction is completed along the corridor.

- The Department is also pursuing mitigation sites along the corridor. One site in Salem is under construction and nearing completion; a second site in Londonderry is under design and will be constructed next year. The Department is working with each of the communities along the corridor to identify additional sites that will be necessary to offset the highway widening impacts to the environmental resources.

Jeff provided an overview of public feedback heard from the various local meetings. That feedback focused on the need to:

- Begin widening construction as soon as possible.
- Minimize impacts to private properties.
- Construct sound barriers to screen and shield neighborhoods.

Jeff also noted that the public, in a broad sense, feels that a 4-lane widening should be done vs. the 3-lane widening, with the idea that a 3-lane widening would require additional widening soon after the 3-lane widening is complete.

The individual towns have also expressed their particular concerns relative to how the project affects their communities.

For Salem a primary issue has been that the project not exacerbate the flooding that occurs in the Town and within the Spickett River watershed today.

For Windham and Salem, a predominant issue has been the need to address water quality and highway runoff, especially with Canobie Lake and Cobbett's Pond located adjacent to the corridor.

Windham is also very much interested in ways to reduce the overall footprint of the highway and the Exit 3 interchange.

In Londonderry and Salem, the neighborhoods have expressed concern about the proposed park and ride lots and the impacts on their quality of life. Various alternatives or means of minimizing impacts are being considered.

Plan Presentation:

Tony Grande presented the concept plans, including a regional perspective overview plan and a typical roadway cross-section plan for the 4-lane option which includes four 12' travel lanes and 12' wide shoulders on the inside and outside of each barrel. Tony noted that space (ranging from 60' to 90') for a potential future rail line is also being reserved within the median. The bike trail is conceptually depicted at the toe of slope or top of bank along the outside of the corridor from Exit 2 to Exit 5.

Tony also described a 400-scale plan showing the entire project limits beginning at the MA/NH state line and proceeding north to the I-93/I-293 split in Manchester. The 400-scale plan depicts a 4-lane option, but a 3-lane option is also available. Tony briefly presented the various interchange and mainline options for the entire project:

- Exit 1, two interchange options: rehabilitate existing interchange ramps with substandard geometry; or reconstruct the ramps to improve geometry.
- Exit 2, two interchange reconstruction options: diamond type interchange configuration; or diamond type configuration NB and loop configuration for the SB ramps.

- Exit 3, a range of options that include: (potentially nine choices) various combinations of improvements for I-93 mainline, NH 111, and the NB/SB ramps.
- Exit 4, two mainline options: easterly widening option that retains the existing SB ramps; or westerly widening option, which requires reconstruction of the SB ramps.
- Exit 5, three interchange options: diamond interchange configuration with NH 28 on-line; or diamond interchange configuration with NH 28 off-line to the east of I-93; or diamond interchange configuration SB with NB interchange ramps realigned opposite Liberty Drive.

Tony noted that space for a potential future rail corridor is also being considered as part of this project. The rail line would begin in Massachusetts, either connected to the existing Manchester to Lawrence rail line or perhaps connected to a new line that would follow I-93 in MA to the Woburn Transportation Center. Space for a rail corridor would be reserved in NH for either option. In NH the rail line begins along the west side of I-93 at the MA/NH state line and continues northerly until just north of Exit 1 where the rail line would cross into the median and continue inside the median, through Exit 5. North of Exit 5 the line would then be connected to the existing Manchester to Lawrence Branch to the west of I-93. This would provide the potential for future connection to the Manchester Airport or downtown Manchester.

In addition, three new Park and Ride facilities are being proposed as part of the I-93 corridor improvements with facilities planned at Exits 2, 3 and 5.

Tony then described the proposed 200 scale improvement plans and options for the I-93 corridor in the Derry area. The plans depict both 3-lane and 4-lane layout options for the I-93 mainline. The options for the Exit 3 area focus basically on three major components, which include the I-93 mainline, NH 111, and the NB and SB ramps.

I-93 Widening

Beginning south of the Windham/Derry Town line, the I-93 design is controlled by the recently replaced and widened North Lowell Road bridges where the inside median edges of both the NB and SB barrels are held and the widening occurs to the outside. To the north through Kendall Pond Road, the NB and SB barrel widening shifts to the west to avoid impacts to a prime wetland.

There are two options for widening I-93 between Kendall Pond Road through the Exit 4 interchange to Stonehenge Road.

Easterly Widening

The first option involves widening I-93 to the east. This alternative would retain the existing SB ramps by holding the westerly edge of the existing I-93 SB barrel with all widening of the SB barrel and construction of the NB barrel occurring to the east. By retaining the existing SB ramp infrastructure, the cost of ledge removal and traffic control is reduced. Also, the existing Exit 4 park and ride facility would not be impacted. The configuration of the NB ramps would be retained, but the ramps would be shifted to the east, reconstructed and lengthened to accommodate the highway widening. This option shifts the I-93 NB barrel closer to Wheeler Pond. No construction would be required in the pond, however, some impacts to the wetlands would occur. North of the Exit 4-interchange area, the widening continues to hold the westerly edge of the SB barrel. In doing so the federally protected apple orchard property is not impacted. This shift does impact a house on the westerly end of Red Lane and the pavement and loading area for two commercial buildings (Londonderry Commercial Center and Stom Commercial Park) along the westerly side of Londonderry Drive. In the vicinity of Stonehenge

Road, the widening of the highway and the bridges over Stonehenge Road occurs to the outside for both the NB and the SB barrels.

Westerly Widening

The second option involves widening I-93 to the west. This alternative would hold the easterly edge of the existing I-93 NB barrel and maintain the widening of I-93 to the west. This concept would shift away from Wheeler Pond and associated wetlands and the Beaver Brook wetland area. No construction would be required in the pond. Some impacts to the wetlands could occur. The westerly shift will require the realignment and reconstruction of the existing SB on and off-ramps. The layout would require substantial rock removal for the reconstruction of the SB ramps. The realignment of the SB ramps would impact the existing park and ride facility and require reconstruction and development of replacement parking. Reconstruction and realignment of the SB ramps will also create substantial traffic control issues while trying to maintain traffic during the removal of the high rock adjacent to traffic. The configuration of the NB ramps would be retained, but the ramps would be reconstructed and lengthened to accommodate the highway widening. North of the Exit 4-interchange area, the westerly shift continues to hold the easterly edge of the NB barrel north from the Exit 4-interchange area. The federally protected apple orchard property would be impacted, but the residence and two commercial properties would not be impacted. A residence off Trolley Car Lane would be impacted. In the vicinity of Stonehenge Road, the widening of the highway and the bridges over Stonehenge Road occurs to the outside for both the NB and the SB barrels

NH 102

The proposed improvements for NH102 can be used with either the easterly or westerly I-93 widening options noted. NH 102 would be generally realigned south of existing NH 102. This would allow the use of the existing bridge to maintain traffic while the new bridge is completed. The new bridge will provide for 2-EB thru lanes, 2-EB left turn lanes, 2-WB thru lanes, a single WB right-turn lane and 5-foot shoulders and sidewalks. The westerly approach work can be completed in the vicinity of the existing NH 102 EB to I-93 SB on-ramp. The proposed NH 102 realignment will tie back to the existing alignment just west of the Burger King drive.

Ash Street/Pillsbury Road Bridge over I-93

The Ash Street/Pillsbury Road Bridge over I-93 would be replaced to accommodate the I-93 widening and the area in the median being preserved for future rail. Two options are under consideration. The first option is an "off-line" alternative that would realign and reconstruct approximately 2500 feet of Ash Street/Pillsbury Road to the south. The existing bridge would be used to maintain traffic during construction and removed after the traffic is shifted to the new structure. The second option is an "on-line" option. The existing bridge would be replaced in its existing location and a temporary detour bridge would be constructed to the south of the existing bridge to maintain traffic.

Noise Barriers

Three noise barrier locations between the Windham /Derry Town line and the Stonehenge Road area are being recommended:

- I-93 NB near Matthew Drive, Derryfield Road and Friar Tuck Lane
- I-93 NB near Seasons Lane

- I-93 SB near Trolley Car Lane

Property Acquisitions (excluding out buildings)

Tony identified the locations of the various homes and businesses that may be acquired as part of the highway improvements through this segment. The total number of acquisitions would vary depending upon which options are included:

<u>I-93 East or West Widening</u>	Spinnaker Drive (2 ho. - ledge)	2 Ho.
<u>I-93 East Widening</u>	Red Lane (1 ho.); Recor Trading (1 com.)	1 Ho.; 1 Com.
<u>I-93 West Widening</u>	Sta. 1690 SB (1 ho.); Recor Trading (1 com.)	<u>1 Ho.; 1 Com.</u>
		Totals: 3 Ho.; 1 Com.

Bike Trail

A bike trail is also shown in a very conceptual format along the I-93 corridor. The bike trail would begin at the Exit 2 park & ride lot and fit into the highway construction running northerly to the Exit 5 area. Potential connectivity to local roads, park and ride lots, and the regional bike network is being considered. Through the Exit 4 area, the path would continue to parallel the eastern edge of the NB barrel up to Fordway Lane and then cross over to parallel the western edge of the SB barrel. The trail would continue north and cross NH 102, have access to the park & ride lot and continue north along the SB barrel. At Pillsbury Road, depending on the east or west widening, the trail would be placed on the same side where the widening will take place.

Tony noted that currently the Department feels that the preferred alternative, based on the information at this time, would be to: construct four lanes along I-93 from Salem to Manchester, construct the easterly shift of the I-93 mainline through the Exit 4 area and construct the "on-line" option to replace the Ash Street/Pillsbury Road Bridge over I-93.

Matrix and Handouts

Tony then described the tables and graphics provided as handouts, which include: 1000 scale color plans of the various improvement options for the four-lane widening of I-93. The handouts also include a summary matrix for both the 3-lane and 4-lane alternatives. The project was split into six segments reflecting the various options along the I-93 corridor. The matrix was developed to better understand how one segment/option compares against another segment/option with respect to environmental and socio-economic impacts. The matrix can also be used to total the impacts for the entire corridor. Tony noted that the matrix is just a quick reference of impacts and cannot really tell the true story of each option without the supporting text, which will be included in the DEIS document.

Wetland Mitigation

Bill Barry explained that as part of the federal guidelines for projects like this the Department is required to mitigate impacts to wetlands. As such the process has begun to identify possible wetland mitigation sites to offset impacts resulting from the project improvements. Bill noted that the total number of wetlands impacted for the project from Salem to Manchester is in the range of 55 to 70 acres. In the Town of Derry the wetland impacts range from 4 to 5 acres. Both the quantity

and the quality of wetlands impacts needs to be identified. In Derry, the quality of the wetlands was identified, based on professional judgment, as 75% moderate quality and 25% high quality. Three major functions and values of the existing wetlands are identified which helps in determining the quality of the wetland. They include flood flow alteration (storage), water quality treatment function, and wildlife habitat.

As directed by the Resource Agencies, the project must provide compensatory mitigation to compensate for the impacts. The mitigation is essentially made up of four forms:

- Wetland restoration, which in effect restores previously, filled wetlands.
- Enhanced wetlands, by planting different plants or by changing the hydrology of existing wetlands.
- Wetland creation, which creates wetlands out of upland or dry land area.
- Preservation, which includes preserving existing wetland and an adjacent upland. Preservation is popular to the local communities because the property is preserved in perpetuity and managed by the community or some other environmental agency.

Bill described a handout identifying 37 potential mitigation sites of which perhaps a few will be selected to provide some types of compensatory mitigation for the project. Two sites of the 37 are already included in the Department's advance mitigation areas. Two sites are located in Derry and both sites are preservation type sites. Bill explained that the locations need further evaluation and discussion with the communities and Resource Agencies as to which sites best serve the mitigation package. Bill noted that the process is flexible and welcomed input on the current list or the addition of other sites.

Schedule

Jeff Brillhart noted that another round of meetings would be held in February and March with similar format to this one with the intent to further identify the Department's preferred alternative prior to the Public Hearing. The DEIS will be published some time in March. The Public Hearing is tentatively schedule for April or May of next year. The Final Environmental Impact Statement is scheduled for completion by the end of 2002. Construction is scheduled to begin in 2004.

Comments/Questions:

- Comment: I live at Derryfield Road, do you plan on widening easterly or westerly? Will you be taking any land from me in that area?
- Tony Grande: We are holding the existing edge of pavement in that area and widening the highway to the west. Any easterly construction in that area will be the result of a proposed soundwall. The highway construction should be contained within the existing highway right-of-way. The limit of the existing highway right of way is the fencing in your back yard.
- Comment: So, you are saying that sound barrier is going to be right along where my fence is right now?
- Tony Grande: The sound barrier location is closer to the highway (approx. 20' from the edge of pavement) and near the elevation of the highway. The slope work and grading to construct the sound barrier may require the construction to be adjacent to the fenced area.
- Jeff Brillhart: The reason that the road is being widened to the west at this location is because there is a well-developed neighborhood and prime wetlands located on the east.

- Comment: In that same area, you talk about the sound barrier, but on the plans it says "proposed" sound barrier; how definite is the barrier?
- Tony Grande: One of the things I mentioned earlier on was there were a number of locations evaluated for sound barriers. The Department proposes to recommend a barrier in this area. It is not definite, but it is being recommended as part of the project.
- Comment: Would letters from residents in that area help strengthen the argument to make it more definitive that a sound barrier be put up in that area?
- Jeff Brillhart: Input from the public via letters or coming to the meetings and speaking up is very important and people are encouraged to do that. Because it is such a big issue, we have challenged ourselves to make sure that we are doing the right thing in terms of trying to propose sound barrier wherever we can. There are state and federal policies that have been well established nationwide. As Tony said, this is one neighborhood of the four or five in this stretch for which a sound barrier is being recommended. With that said, things can change between now and construction.
- Comment: What are you proposing to do for sound if you can't put a sound barrier up? For example, I live on Spinnaker Drive, the third house on the cul-de-sac that is not being taken. The tree line and the two houses across the street from me will be completely gone and I am going to be across the cul-de-sac, looking at the highway, a potential railroad, and a bike path without any type of barrier. Right now, I have a natural sound barrier with all of the trees there.
- Charlie Hood: As Tony just said, the consultant has done the analysis for a number of locations through Derry and Londonderry. There are several locations where we can't either physically put in a noise barrier where we have some other impacts, such as wetlands or historic properties, endangered species, etc., or where the economic criteria is not met, and consequently we can't build a sound barrier. In areas where we are opening up a neighborhood to the highway from a visual perspective and we are unable to construct a noise barrier, we may construct privacy fences and landscaping. That has been done on several projects, most recently in Nashua along the F.E. Everett Turnpike.
- Comment: I would like to put in a request that while you are looking at that area and doing the right-of-way studies, that you acquire my home on Spinnaker Drive.
- Jeff Brillhart: Typically we wouldn't buy that home. It is going to be a home after the project is done and we would typically not buy it from you only to sell it to someone else. That is standard practice. Every so often there are circumstances where the request is accepted, but typically we wouldn't. I would encourage you, if that is what you want to see happen, that you make that request in writing at the time of Public Hearing.
- Comment: I feel you are destroying my entire neighborhood and what I bought into. I will be sitting there with no houses, no trees, no houses across the street from me. If you don't think there is an impact, you are wrong.
- Comment: How effective is the sound barrier? I know now, with two lanes, I can't sit on my backyard in the summer time on a Friday night with all the traffic going north.
- Charlie Hood: Once a barrier is constructed, we generally get an 8 to 10 decibel reduction in the noise levels which would be considered to be a half of what you hear now, or approximately 50% less noise. That is a rule of thumb.
- Comment: Today there are two lanes, won't there be more noise with four lanes?
- Charlie Hood: There will be a small increase. Although there is an increase in the lanes, we are not actually widening toward your property. There might be a decibel or two increase in

noise but again the rule of thumb is you don't perceive a change in the noise level if the change is 3 decibels or less.

Comment: Has the State investigated the potential mitigation site east and west of Fordway?
Bill Barry: Our investigation entails studying the report the Conservation Commission sent us, visiting the site and making a professional evaluation as to the value of that site. Our next step will be to discuss it with the various Resource Agencies and the Town.

Comment: Have you classified it as a good site for mitigation?
Bill Barry: Yes, my sense is that it is a wonderful piece of property. However, it is large, (198 acres) and there is only 4 to 5 acres of wetland being impacted in Derry. Big blocks of property are very valuable. What makes this property valuable is the farmland and upland forest mix with the wetlands adjacent to it. The upland forest are relatively mature now. They are all secondary forest, one time having been 100 years ago pastures or whatever, but now they are very mature upland with a variety of oak trees and high value for wildlife. The wetlands themselves make up a huge wetland emergent marsh; one of the biggest ones in the region probably. Then you have the farm with its property quickly converting into shrubs which has isolated apple trees. There is also the historical context of the building, even though the barn has fallen down. It must have been a wonderfully looking scenic site at one point and it would make an ideal conservation land or park land.

Comment: It was my understanding that that property had been investigated and there are a couple of rare trees on there. Did you find that?
Bill Barry: I didn't look at it from that kind of inspection, but there is a lot to see there. The fact that it has been identified as prime wetlands, means somebody else looked at it in more detail and recognized several years ago that it was well worth preserving.

Comment: Who would manage it? The Society for Preservation of Forests, the Audubon Society? Do you have a management plan for it?
Jeff Brillhart: It would be our preference to find someone to oversee the property to ensure it doesn't get abused in one way or another. One thing I would point out on that property is, the Department, would be reluctant to buy an old house. So it is conceivable that we would buy everything around that old house leaving the old house for someone else to buy and hopefully fix up.

Comment: Would there be night construction?
Jeff Brillhart: I would assume there would be night construction. We do paving at night. We don't have a game plan as to how much construction will be done during the night or how much would be done during the day. The intent is to widen the road in stages so we can maintain traffic to two lanes at all times during construction. As long as we can do that we can limit the amount of night work.

Comment: Would the sound barrier be put up at the beginning of construction so that some of the construction noise would be blocked from us or would the sound barrier be the very last thing?
Jeff Brillhart: It will depend on what we are doing in that exact spot. In Manchester, where we are reconstructing I-293, we are putting up three of four sound barriers before the major portions of the construction begins. That would be another issue to raise at the Public Hearing and remind the Department again that putting up the sound barriers early would make sense.

- Comment: Do you expect the design to change much?
- Jeff Brillhart: No. Once we get approval for a layout, the designs are fairly well thought out and major changes should not occur. In the design process, we are constantly reviewing our plans, rethinking them to some degree, and questioning the design as it is finalized. However the intent is to stay within the approved footprint of the proposed construction. The current information is based on 200-scale plan and contours. The final plans will be developed at 50 scale with 3" contours. Currently we are showing what we believe are the worst case impacts, and as the plans become more detailed the impacts can be reduced.
- Comment: Would the Exit 4 area in Derry start in 2004 and would you construct this as one contract?
- Jeff Brillhart: We would do the widening as a series of individual construction projects. We may do the bridges first and some of that may occur in Derry or Londonderry. That has not been determined. Preferably the widening would start in the south and work north, so that Derry would be in the range of 2006/2007, if that was strictly what we did.
- Comment: Wouldn't it make more sense that since you are doing construction at the Bodwell Road area to start there?
- Jeff Brillhart: There is a lot of traffic heading north these days. We are working in the Bodwell Road area because there are four bridges that are in poor condition just like there were bridges in Londonderry, Derry and Windham that were in poor condition and we couldn't wait any longer to fix them. In terms of the overall needs of I-93, the area south of Exit 3 has the biggest problem and should be addressed as soon as possible.